

Deuteronomy 34 - Thursday, February 9th, 2012

(1a) Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho.

- This last chapter, of this last book, in the Pentateuch, which is also known as the five books of Moses may be like a memorial service for Moses.
- The reason I say that is because we're now going to say goodbye to this "man of God," and in so doing, commence with a celebration of his life.
- While death can be unspeakably painful for us as the living whom our loved ones leave behind, the death of the godly are precious to the Lord.

Psalms 116:15 NKJV Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.

Charles Spurgeon - "Having finished his work and pronounced his last blessing, the prophet cheerfully climbs towards heaven, Death to the saints is an ascent. Alone he pursued his upward pathway, but the Lord was at his side, and thus when earthly companions shall bid us adieu, we shall find the Lord at our right hand."

(1b) And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, (2) all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, (3) the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar.

- I love passages like this in the Word of God because they're a needed reminder of how God is so gracious, merciful, compassionate and kind.
- It's almost as if God allows Moses to have the best of both worlds, in that he shows him the Promised Land, before he enters into His presence.
- I'm of the belief that it's virtually impossible to overstate the grace of God, in the life of a believer, and isn't our study in Romans reinforcing this?

- There's something else here that I think I'd be grossly remiss were I not to point out before we move on to verse four, as it can be easily missed.
- Notice the Lord shows him "all" the land. Not some or most, all. I believe this speaks to how it is that God desires to show us all of His promises.
- Of course this presupposes that when God shows us all His promises, He's met with the eye of our faith to both trust and believe His promises.

Charles Spurgeon - "No doubt that eagle eye was supernaturally strengthened for its last earthly gaze; and even so have we seen the faculties of dying saints greatly enlarged just as they were departing. They have appeared to see and now more than unaided minds could have perceived. Heaven lay un-aided before them, and the land so far off to us was very near to the eye of their faith"

(4) Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there."

- This one verse comes packaged with a twofold application to our lives, both of which have a very powerful and profound meaning for our lives.
- First, as it relates to "walking by faith and not by sight," God tells Moses He has caused him "to see it with his eyes." His faith had become sight.
- One day, we too, after walking by faith, we'll see with our eyes, that which, here-to-fore we hope for and had the evidence of, and substance of.

Hebrews 11:1 NKJV Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- The second application deals with the detail in the documentation and legalization of all that God has promised to both, do for us, and give to us.
- Here's what I'm thinking, the detail that is given in the text geographically, indicates that God will deliver and fulfill all that He has promised to do.

I like how one Bible commentator put it; "The invitation to Moses to view the land was not merely a kindly provision of God to allow His servant to view Israel's inheritance. It may have had some legal significance. There is some evidence that this was part of a legal process. A man 'viewed' what he was to possess."

- By the way, do you know what the last thing Moses would have viewed with his own eyes right before his death, which we see in verse five?
- He would have seen the cross. How so? By virtue of the numbers of the camps of the twelve tribes of the Israelites divided into four camps.
- With the tabernacle at the center, and four camps with three tribes each, camped east to west, and north to south, was in the shape of a cross.

(5) So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is the "epitaph" of sorts that we're given here; "Moses, the servant of the Lord."
- The reason I find this so interesting is because Moses could have arguably been the recipient of something grander than just that of a servant.
- At least give him the courtesy of being referred to as "the man of God," as opposed to "the servant of the Lord," as we saw in the last chapter.

David Guzik, of Calvary Chapel Santa Barbara says it best this way; It was not "Moses, Prince of Egypt." It was not "Moses, Murderer of an Egyptian." It was not "Moses, Shepherd in the Wilderness." It was not "Moses, Spokesman for a Nation." It was not "Moses, Miracle worker." It was not "Moses, Prophet." It was not "Moses, the Man Who Saw a Piece of God's Glory." It was not "Moses, Who Never Entered the Promised Land." At the end of it all, the title was simple: Moses the servant of the LORD. This should be enough for us. We often say it, and it sounds so humble to say it, but it is much higher to really live it. To be satisfied with simply being the servant of the LORD is a precious place indeed. It is the happiest of all stations in life, for when the Master is glorified, the servants are satisfied.

- I have in my library a treasured book titled; "One Thousand Thoughts for Funeral Occasions." In it, I happened upon a most apropos writing.

"On the walls of an old temple was found this picture: a king forging from his crown, a chain, and near by, a slave making of his chain, a crown; and underneath was written, 'life is what one makes it, no matter of what it is made.'"

"One Thousand Thoughts for Funeral Occasions" p. 438

- I share that to say this; "Moses was that man who made of his chain, a crown, all the while in his humility maintaining the heart of a servant.

(6) And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.

- Why? Why would God bury Moses in a location that, to this day, nobody would ever be able to find? What follows are a couple of possibilities.
- First, it was for present protection, namely, God was protecting them then, and us now, from worshipping the remains of such a man as Moses.
- Second, it was for future direction, specifically as it relates to, what some believe, will be the reappearing of Moses as one of the two witnesses.

Jon Courson in his commentary writes; “Jude 9 tells us that when Moses was buried, the devil fought for his body. Why would the devil want the body of Moses? I believe it’s because Moses will be one of the two witnesses of Revelation 11, calling down fire, preaching the truth, telling people about antichrist, sharing the gospel.”

(7) Moses *was* one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.

- It’s important to note that the death of Moses wasn’t because he was old and decrepit at a hundred and twenty years old rather, it was his time.
- In other words, his death was according to that which the Lord had said to him, and it was according to the time that the Lord had set for him.

Job 14:5 NIV Man’s days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.

- God had determined the days of Moses’ life, and you could divide Moses’ life into three parts, consisting of forty years each for a total of 120.
- The first 40 he became something in Egypt, the second 40 he was nothing in the desert, but the last 40 he could do anything in God’s calling.
- Perhaps better said, in order for God to do anything through us, there can be nothing in us, that would think it had something to do with us.

(8) And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses ended.

- This mourning for thirty days has its roots in the cultural dynamics of the Middle-Eastern people to this day however it needs to have an end.
- The Arab people will actually mourn for a period of one year, then, after the one-year is completed, they essentially have permission to move on.
- That’s what I want to point out here in verse eight. There is a time to mourn certainly, but one needs to have permission to move on, guilt free.

Charles Spurgeon – “The mourning was long, for Moses was a great man, but it was not too long, for there was other work for the living men to do.”

(9) Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

- There’s something here that’s woven into the fabric of this verse and it’s not really that visible or noticeable at first glance as it relates to Joshua.
- Notice the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. In other words, they followed the leadership of Joshua.
- It’s been said that the litmus test as to whether or not you are a leader, is determined by whether or not people are following you as their leader.

(10) But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, (11) in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, (12) and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

- What a glorious way to end, not only the chapter and the book, but, the entirety of the first five books of Moses; Genesis through Deuteronomy.
- I want to close by paying tribute to this “servant of the Lord” of whom it is written that since then there has not arisen in Israel such a one as him.
- Actually, I found four, you may find more, but four reasons as to why it is that this is said of Moses with the hopes it could be said of us as well.

- The first one is Moses had a close and personal relationship with the Lord, so much so that there was an intimacy in knowing Him face to face.
- I suppose you could say that He knew what the image of God looked like, what God’s voice sounded like, and what God’s character was like.
- It wasn’t physically or literally, but spiritually and intimately. Moses was close enough to the Lord, because he spent time enough with the Lord.

- The second one is Moses wasn’t afraid of the supernatural. Now, please don’t get weird on me, I’m not going to get into the hyper spiritual here.
- Let me explain, I think we tie the hands of God’s miracles with the ropes of our own preconceived notions and even fears of the supernatural.
- That’s not to say we become too signs and wonders orientated which isn’t our problem. It’s that we’re not signs and wonders orientated enough.

- The third one is that Moses did all that God had sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land.
- Just because we’re close to the Lord, intimate with the Lord, doesn’t necessarily mean we’ll always be obedient to heed the calling of the Lord.

- The fourth one is that Moses was keenly aware of how the source of his power and greatness was found only in the Lord, and not in himself.
- He didn’t rely on his own strength when by any stretch of the imagination he most certainly could have. Instead, he relied only on the Lord.